



Senate

General Assembly

January Session, 2011

File No. 365

Senate Bill No. 250

Senate, April 5, 2011

The Committee on Environment reported through SEN. MEYER of the 12th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the bill ought to pass.

AN ACT EXTENDING CHARTER OAK PARK PASSES TO DISABLED VETERANS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Subsection (d) of section 23-26 of the general statutes is
2 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from*
3 *passage*):

4 (d) The commissioner shall issue to any resident of the state who is
5 sixty-five years of age or older and to any resident of this state who is a
6 disabled veteran, as defined in section 14-254 or under federal law,
7 without fee, upon application of such resident, a nontransferable
8 lifetime pass which shall permit free parking, admission and boat
9 access parking for use at any state park, forest or state recreational
10 facility, provided the commissioner shall not be required to issue such
11 a pass for use of any park, forest or facility which is wholly managed
12 by a private concessionaire and may require payment of fees for
13 special events.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	23-26(d)
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ENV *Joint Favorable*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 12 \$	FY 13 \$
Department of Environmental Protection	GF - Potential Revenue Loss	Up to 502,500	Up to 502,500

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill, which expands the Charter Oak Pass issued by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to certain disabled veterans, could result in a revenue loss of up to \$502,500 in both FY 12 and FY 13.

The bill allows any resident disabled veteran under the age of 65 would have free access to a season pass to the state's parks, forests, boat launches, and other recreational facilities (state season pass). The rate for an in-state resident season pass is \$67.

It is estimated that there are currently 15,000¹ disabled veterans in the state and approximately half of this population (approximately 7,500 veterans) would be under age 65 and would therefore be eligible for participation in this program.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to the number of in-state disabled veterans who utilize this program.

¹ CGA Select Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

OLR Bill Analysis**SB 250*****AN ACT EXTENDING CHARTER OAK PARK PASSES TO DISABLED VETERANS.*****SUMMARY:**

This bill requires the environmental protection commissioner to issue to certain veterans, not just state residents who are age 65 and older, nontransferable lifetime passes for free parking and admission to state parks, forests, and recreational facilities; provided the facilities are not wholly managed by a private concessionaire. To qualify for a pass, an applicant must be a disabled veteran, as defined in state and federal law, and live in Connecticut. A pass holder may be required to pay fees at special events.

Under state law, a “disabled veteran” is any veteran who served in time of war, as defined in law, and who has any of the following service-connected disability certified by the Veterans’ Administration: he or she (1) has had one or both arms or legs amputated, (2) lost the use of an arm or leg, (3) is blind, (4) has traumatic brain injury, or (5) is paraplegic or hemiplegic. The bill does not reference a specific federal law for a definition for a disabled veteran.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

COMMITTEE ACTION

Environment Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 27 Nay 0 (03/18/2011)